

# RECIPROCAL MANAGEMENT IN *MAPALUS* AS A MODEL OF COMMUNITY ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT IN SOUTHEAST MINAHASA, NORTH SULAWESI

By:  
TREESJE IMRAN  
Airlangga University  
[treis\\_imran@yahoo.com](mailto:treis_imran@yahoo.com)

## ABSTRACT

*Mapalus* is a Minahasan local wisdom-based system of cooperative work through reciprocal management system in which each member of the community has equal an opportunity or turn. This empowerment model has been implemented generation after generation. The Minahasan philosophy of *Sitou Tumou Tumou Tou* (meaning "Humans live to let other humans live") is the ethical foundation of *mapalus*. There are many types of *mapalus*, such as agricultural *mapalus*, housebuilding *mapalus*, and community events *mapalus*. A qualitative research was done by focusing on a number of villages in Tombatu District in which the *mapalus* tradition still takes hold, namely the villages of Silian, Lobu, and Botelen. Several key informants were interviewed and repeated observations were made.

The research results showed that: a) the reciprocal management system (taking turns or alternations) grows in the community independently and does not depend on any top-down program; b) the ethical value in reciprocal *mapalus*, namely *Sitou Tumou Tou*, is still maintained in the working ethos, organizational culture, and community participation; c) the compliance of members towards the *mapalus* ethical code was very high, where members were willing to be punished by whipping if they broke the code; d) *mapalus* has improved the economic condition of members and village residents through agriculture, house ownership, etc., and e) the reciprocal system in *mapalus* accelerates the spread of economic growth because of the system that was developed, namely the Community Economic Development. The conclusion is that the reciprocity in the *mapalus* is an economic empowerment model based on local wisdom that grew from the community in accordance with the philosophy of *Sitou Tumou Timou Tou*.

Keywords: reciprocal, *mapalus*, empowerment, management, communal

## Introduction

Empowerment must be rooted in the worldview and the cultural values of the local community because the worldview and cultural views comprise the soul of the community. According to Harry Hikmat (2001: 46), community empowerment is an effort to improve the ability and potential of a community so that the community can realize their identity, spirit, and dignity. An empowerment model will be carried out and lived by the community if the empowerment model is in accordance with the local culture of the community. Local culture in the form of traditional customs is carried out from generation to generation in the form of traditional knowledge. Armada (2009, 29) argues that traditional knowledge is a

living philosophy in the form of wisdoms about life, ways of life, traditional art sites, and the likes of which that are attached to the locus of said community. The Minahasa community in North Sulawesi Province has a custom in the form of traditional knowledge, namely *Mapalus*, which is a system of mutual cooperation. *Mapalus* uses reciprocal management in the work culture, which has been practiced for generations as a traditional knowledge.

Reciprocal management is a management system in which each of the *Mapalus* leader and members takes turns working the fields. This system was developed based on a principle of the Minahasa people called *Si Tou Tumou Tumou Tou*, namely that humans must enliven one another. In this philosophy, there is an acknowledgment that human beings basically have to be useful to each other, so that the people affected can lead useful lives for yet other people. *Mapalus* as a work system is built on a work ethic of mutual assistance for mutual interests and mutual benefits. The reciprocal system in *Mapalus* forms a communal work ethic, not an individualistic one. The workload is distributed by the leader of the *Mapalus* group. In *Mapalus*, a communal organizational culture is built based on traditional knowledge with the basic standard of mutual assistance because of the *Torang Samua Basudara* (based on the kinship system) that the ancestors had built. Rural communities in Minahasa have a strong culture and hold a principle of togetherness in simplicity without any self-serving interests. In the midst of advances in science and technology, as well as globalization, the meaning of togetherness based on the value of traditional knowledge continues to be maintained despite challenges due to modernization. However, some regions still have a strong *Mapalus* tradition, such as the Tombatu District, Southeast Minahasa Regency, which was the object of this research. Village communities that are still not contaminated with various social and cultural shocks and political and economic interests remain tied to traditional knowledge of *Mapalus*. The main problem is the urgency of implementing the reciprocal system in the management of *Mapalus* as a model of community empowerment.

### **Literature Review**

Etymologically, empowerment comes from the word "power", which means strength or ability. Empowerment can be interpreted as a process towards being empowered, or a process to gain power/strength to those who have not been empowered. (Ambar, 2004: 77). Robert Chamber argues that community empowerment is an economic development concept that summarizes social values, namely being "people-centered, participatory, empowering, and sustainable" (Robert Chamber, 1995: 347). The success of empowerment is very dependent on the management applied. Reciprocal management studies are based management systems that are applied by leaders as decision makers (Robert Keitner 1983, 179). This study was conducted on *Mapalus* as a traditional knowledge. According to Rompas (1987), *Mapalus* means *ma palus* (giving to each other), whereas according to Tumenggung (1981) *Mapalus* highlights the nature of a sense of unity and unity and togetherness

According to Edi Suharto, empowerment refers to increasing the ability of people, especially vulnerable and weak groups so that they have power (Edi Suharto, 1997: 207-224). Empowerment concerns the problem of how individuals, groups, or communities try to control their own lives and try to shape the future according to their wishes. (Isbandi RA 2002: 152-163). Furthermore, Ambar (2007, 83) outlines the stages of empowerment, namely: 1) Awareness

stage, 2) Capacity transformation phase, and 3) stage of increasing ability, abilities, and skills. Economic empowerment skills in *Mapalus* are rooted in the *sitou timou tumou tou* philosophy. AJ Sondakh (2004, 2) states that in the view of *sitou timou tumou tou*, people are encouraged to empower others if they themselves have become independent (empowered).

## Research Method

### 1. Type of Research

This research was qualitative in nature, which was focused on: 1) exploring the basic philosophy of reciprocal management in *Mapalus*, 2) analyzing the existence and processes of reciprocal management as traditional knowledge-based economic empowerment, and 3) assessing the qualitative impact of reciprocal management on the lives of people in the research locations. This research was carried out in the Southeast Minahasa Regency, specifically in the Tombatu District, where *Mapalus* tradition is still very strong. The samples chosen were the Villages of Betelen, Tombatu Satu, Tombatu Dua, and Tombatu Tiga.

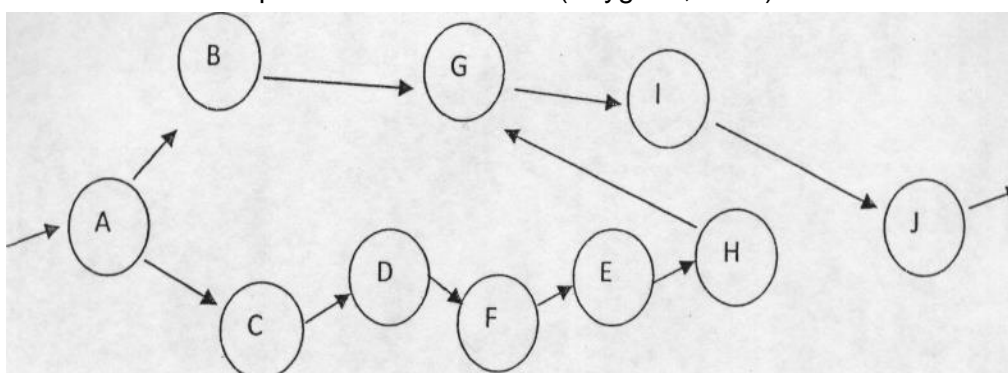
### 2. Subjects and Informants

The research subjects or informants were *Mapalus* leaders, *Mapalus* members, and others. There were 30 informants, consisting of 20 leaders and members of *Mapalus*, 5 religious figures, and 5 government officials.

### 3. Data Collection and Analysis Techniques

In qualitative research, data collection focuses on interviews with key informants and observations (Subagyo and Andreas 2004: 111, Moleong 1993: 223). The informants determined by the researcher were those who were considered to have knowledge about *Mapalus*. The number of informants was developed according to the Snowball concept. According to Sugyono (2012), snowball is a sampling technique in which a researcher builds from a small number of samples, then adding it incrementally until obtaining a higher number of samples.

Figure 3.1.  
Sample Collection Process (Suygono, 2012)



### 4. Data Processing and Analysis Techniques,

1) Analysis of informant interview results 2) Analysis of documents, both internal and external, as well as other documents. 3 To reinforce the impact of economic

empowerment, a statistical analysis on Southeast Minahasa was conducted. The Blending Analysis technique was used with quantitative data to clarify the qualitative analysis.

## Results And Discussion

### 1. The Philosophical Basis of Reciprocal Management in *Mapalus*

The results of the study were qualitative with observations and interviews with administrators and *Mapalus* members, indicating that they were all bound to a single understanding named *Sitou Timou Tomou Tou* (AJ Sondakh 2004,2). In this worldview, people are encouraged to empower others if they themselves have become independent (empowered). This philosophy is applied in *Mapalus* activities, which do not distinguish people except by those who are members who want to work and those who do not work. The position of leaders and members is the same in accordance with the division of labor or tasks agreed upon in the customary agreement. The reciprocal management system is implemented so that administrators and members empower each other and grow together economically. In reciprocal management, the size of work or task is not seen from the heaviness or lightness of the work but from the values in accordance with the meaning of the *sitou timou tumou tou* philosophy. The nature of reciprocal management, namely communality, is that leaders and members have the same rights and obligations. The elements of *Sitou timou tumou tou* in reciprocal management can be seen in the following table.

Table 1.  
*Sitou timou tumou tou* philosophy in *Mapalus* reciprocal management

No.	Element	Concept	Meaning	Description
1.	SITOU	Humans, or aimed at humans	Humans as social beings	Humans cannot live without others
2.	TIMOU	Life (Human Being)	Life must have meaning	Life must bring meaning to others
3.	TUMOU	Enliven	Being useful for fellow humans (axiology)	Living humans are only said to be alive if they give benefit
4.	TOU	Others	Fellow humans around where one lives, etc.	Others will enjoy our good behavior.

Source: 2018 Analysis Data

The research results in several *Mapalus* groups in the sample villages showed that reciprocal management was developed consciously without coercion and lasted for generations. In reciprocal management, each member is aware that he or she is working for the interests of others and for common interest. There is no system of forced labor in *Mapalus*, but work is carried out voluntarily and responsibly according to the meaning of *Mapalus* (Rompas, 1987,1), which is *ma, palus* (mutual giving). Tumenggung (1981) argues that *Mapalus* emphasizes the nature of a sense of unity, wholeness, and togetherness. The work value in reciprocal *Mapalus* work management is for communal happiness based on

family. Community empowerment in *Mapalus* focuses on joint development, both for administrators and members, especially in terms of economy. All members in the family are empowered, including women, because in addition to the agricultural *Mapalus* there is an event *Mapalus* and a housing *Mapalus*, where all family members can play a role in *Mapalus*. *Mapalus* as a Minahasa local culture has its roots in customs and traditional Minahasa law in the form of mutual cooperation work. *Mapalus* culture continues to grow because people in rural areas have a sense of mutual need for one another. In the Minahasa region, there are four sub-tribes, namely Tonsea, Tombulu, Tolour, Tonsawang, and Tontemboan, who work together for others. The term *maendo* has changed with some calling it *maando* (Kalempouw, 1968: 60). According to Kalangi (1971: 63), *Mapalus* is a group of around 10-40 people, where group members have the same interests and in turn will get a share of the work. In Minahasa history, *Mapalus* originated from agriculture, including clearing rice fields or other fields, cutting wood, hoeing, and planting rice (Grafland 1991 203).

## 2. Rotation System in *Mapalus* Reciprocal Management

Reciprocal Management in *Mapalus* uses a Rotation System, where all members and leaders will have a turn to work on their rice fields or other fields together. This management is a Total Quality Management, where all members of the organization apply all agreed Management concepts (Agus Subardi 2008,2). The elements of management, namely planning, organizing, actuating, and, controlling (James Af Stoner, Charles Wankel 1985.4), are done together. The reciprocal management of *Mapalus* is based on a shared work ethic of communal advancement with strong transparency. Leadership in *Mapalus* management is different from other organizations. The difference lies in the function, where the leader is also a member. A leader runs three managerial roles at once, namely the interpersonal role, informational role, and the access breaker role (Herold Koonts, Hentsz Weihrich 1988.45) *Mapalus* provides an opportunity for everyone, whether they be young, old, male, or female, to work, so those who are not willing work may not be a member of *Mapalus*. People who are lazy and negligent will be whipped and those who are diligent will be praised. This is a form of behavior control in *Mapalus* in the form of Reward and Punishment (Ghrist Agyris 1981, 23)

Table 2.  
Reciprocal Management System in *Mapalus*

No.	Element Management	System	Characteristics	Description
1.	Planning	Plans are made together (communally according to custom)	Open: <i>Mapalus</i> leaders and members are the same.	Planning is bound by customary agreements
2.	Organizing	Organizations are communal, the leader and members are equal in taking responsibility	Equity where the leader bears the risk first	In reciprocal management the chairman concurrently serves as a member and has

				the same rights
3.	Actuiting	Leadership is a shared (communal) leadership	Open and equal, egalitarian, not individualistic	Reciprocal management is focused on communal shared benefits
4.	Controlling	Joint control in terms of penalties is carried out openly if there are those who are negligent	Joint control, all members have the right to control	This system is based on customary law with the <i>sitou timou tumou tou</i> philosophy

Source: Analysis Data

The table above shows that reciprocal management is applied based on the *Mapalus* ethos for togetherness. This management is obeyed together based on the standard ethos of mutual assistance. *Mapalus* can last a long time and for generations because it is rooted in the work ethos of *Tumou Tou* for mutual interests and enlivening others. The types of *Mapalus* Activities are: 1) agriculture in the form of working the land together, 2) home construction *Mapalus*, where permanent and semi-permanent houses are built in mutual cooperation, 3) Event *Mapalus*, 4) Money *Mapalus* (arisan), and 5) Grief *Mapalus*. In carrying out work, as an encouragement to work, they offer songs and worship. In ancient times, people did not know the clock to measure the length of work, so two bottles of measuring devices were used. One bottle is filled with sand until it is full and one is left empty. The two bottles are placed in such a way and the two mouthpieces are placed close together, so the sand will move from the full bottle little by little to the empty bottle. The transfer of sand is estimated to take half an hour. In reciprocal management, each member in the *Mapalus* develops a system of reciprocal interdependence (Thomson 1967,94). This concept was developed by James Thomson in terms of organizational relations.

### 3. *Mapalus* as a Model for Community Economic Empowerment.

The results of the study showed that *Mapalus* as a community empowerment system has strong roots in the community in the sample area, namely the Tombatu District, Southeast Minahasa Regency. The *Mapalus* tradition is still strong in the villages of Betelen, Tombatu Satu, and Tombatu Dua. The forms of *Mapalus* in the sample villages were Agriculture *Mapalus*, Housing development *Mapalus*, marriage/death event *Mapalus*, and money *Mapalus* such as arisan. Every community activity in the sample area always involved *Mapalus*. The *Mapalus* was so strongly rooted that members who did not fulfill their obligations were sentenced to caning. This happened in the *Mapalus* housing construction activity, in which each member took turns to receive a house construction allocation.

Various community empowerment efforts had been carried out by the central and regional governments since 2000 in this area such as Inpres Pasar, Bangdes, and the well-known Inpres Desa Tertinggal (IDT), Development and Improvement Program for Small Farmers and Fishermen Income (P4K), Savings and Credit Program for People's Welfare Businesses (Takesra-Kukesra), District Development Program (PPK), Urban Poverty Reduction Program (P2KP),

Disadvantaged Village Infrastructure Development Program, the Coastal Community Economic Empowerment Program (PEMP), and Social Security Network (Ambar Teguh Sulisstiyan 2004). However, the sole long-lasting program was *Mapalus* because the other programs above were project-oriented, implemented top-down, and were not based on traditional knowledge originating from the local culture. The strong attachment of the community to *Mapalus* has led to a low dependency on external programs. The community strongly believed in the empowerment model based on the traditional knowledge of *Mapalus*. The strength of the *Mapalus* tradition in the central region of Southeast Minahasa, as in the Tombatu District, caused the poverty level to be not overly high. This was caused by people who still maintained *Mapalus*. The results of the observation on the low poverty level in the Tombatu area were caused by the continued perseverance of *Mapalus* in the community as a model of increasing welfare based on traditional knowledge. The community in Tombatu District was not closed against various government programs for community empowerment, but they still adhered to the *Mapalus* tradition. *Mapalus* as an effort to empower traditional knowledge based on economy was not driven by programs or projects, but was inspired by the community.

Table 3.  
The impact *Mapalus* on community economic empowerment

No.	Form of <i>Mapalus</i>	Effect	Impact	Description
1.	Agriculture <i>Mapalus</i>	The area of productive land continued to increase in the Tombatu region	Increased income of member farmers from agricultural products	The high agricultural productivity was due to the large area of land in the Southeast Minahasa region
2.	House Development <i>Mapalus</i>	Semi-permanent and permanent home ownership continued to increase	Improved welfare of the community in the Tombatu region, Southeast Minahasa Regency	Home ownership as an indicator of welfare and prosperity from an economic standpoint
3.	Event <i>Mapalus</i>	Families were rid of expenses and debt	Minimized role of middlemen because people helped each other	The level of well-being continued to be maintained and poverty could be eradicated in the Tombatu region
4.	Grief <i>Mapalus</i>	Families did not get worse of and were not burdened with debt	Treated families could recover and did not become entangled in economic depression	Grief <i>Mapalus</i> was also supported by the regional government with the provision of death compensation

Source: Analysis Data

*Mapalus* as a form of community economic empowerment has been proven and long been operating. This can be seen in the level of welfare of the people in the Tombatu region, which was quite high. Indicators of community welfare can be seen in increasing agricultural productivity and growing permanent and semi-permanent home ownership. In people's lives, there is already a model of empowerment inherited from generation to generation, called *Mapalus*.

The *Mapalus* economic empowerment model as traditional knowledge is born, grows, and develops from people's awareness to progress and grow together. *Mapalus* is based on the Minahasa traditional philosophy that requires everyone to work to be economically empowered, so they can empower others. Chamber suggests that community empowerment is an economic development concept that summarizes social values. This concept reflects a "people-centered, participatory, empowering, and sustainable" paradigm (Robert Chamber, 1995: 347). This kind of empowerment model should be developed throughout Indonesia because of the strong social values and traditional knowledge.

In principle, economic empowerment must involve all elements in the community, including women and children. This applies specifically in *Mapalus* as a form of traditional knowledge-based economic empowerment. Empowerment refers to the condition or outcome to be achieved by a social change, namely a society that has the strength, power, or knowledge and ability to fulfill life, whether they be in physical, economic, social, and mental terms, such as self-confidence, being able to convey inspiration, having jobs, engaging in social participation, and having independent abilities for their life's tasks. Empowerment in terms of goals is often used as an indicator of the success of empowerment itself. Rukminto considers that community empowerment can be seen as a program or process. As a program, empowerment is seen as stages of activities that usually have been determined for the period of achievement. Meanwhile, as a process, empowerment is a continuous process. In this regard, empowerment does not function to eliminate problems, but prepares structures and systems in the community so that they are proactive and responsive to the needs and problems that arise in the society. (Rukminto, AI 2002, 171-177).

Reciprocal management in *Mapalus* is used as a model of economic empowerment with the concept of growing together without inequality. It is an effort to realize interconnection and balance in a directed order so that the order can develop independently. In other words, empowerment programs are efforts that are directed so that an order can achieve a condition that allows it to build on itself. Thus, in the empowerment activities there are three main things that need to be considered in its development, namely: 1) Basic knowledge and intellectual skills (ability to analyze causal relationships for each problem that arises); 2) Getting access to material and non-material resources to develop their production and self-development; and 3) Organizations and management that exist in the community need to be functioned as a vehicle for managing their collective development activities.

By continuing to develop *Mapalus* as a model of economic empowerment based on traditional knowledge, it is expected that the Southeast Minahasa community has a strong economic resilience in this post-modern era. The traditional knowledge of *Mapalus* requires all its members to be independent, prosperous, and then can improve the welfare of others according to the philosophy of *Si Tou Ti mou Tumou Tou* (humans must live by enlivening others).



The Minahasa Folk Saying and *Mapalus* continue to be trusted by Minahasa people for generations as a means to bolster the prosperity of each member of the community.

### Conclusions

1. The basis of empowerment in reciprocal management is rooted in *Si Tou Timou Tumoi Tou*. The traditional knowledge of *Mapalus* is focused on the *sitou timou tumou tou* ethos, where independent human beings will be able to empower others in their surroundings. The ethos has a strong binding capacity, so *Mapalus* can survive for generations according to the results of research in sample villages. *Mapalus* has become a traditional knowledge that is still strongly maintained in the area of Southeast Minahasa Regency, specifically the Tombatu District.
2. Reciprocal management in *Mapalus* is carried out with a mutually agreed rotation system. Both the administrators and members have the same position in the rotation system. The processes of Planning, Organizing, Actuating, and Monitoring are jointly implemented on the basis of agreement. In reciprocal management, all members understand the goals of the organization. Total Management of the use of finance and division of labor are carried out transparently, including violations that are disclosed openly.
3. Empowerment in the traditional knowledge of *Mapalus* is rooted in the *tumou tou* ethos, namely a communal-based togetherness ethos. This shared ethos is reciprocal. Various *Mapalus* were still maintained in the research sample areas in Tombatu District, namely in the form of agricultural *Mapalus*. The impact on the economy was very clearly seen in the level of welfare of people with home ownership, as well as low poverty rates and low open unemployment compared to other regencies in North Sulawesi.

### REFERENCES

- A, J Sondakh. (2004). *Sitou Timou Tumou Tou (Tou Minahasa): Refleksi Atas Evolusi Nilai Nilai Manusia*, Pustaka Sinar Harapan: Jakarta.
- Agus Subardi. (2008) *Manajemen. Suatu pengantar BPFE*: Yogkiakarta.
- Ambar Teguh Sulistiyani. (2004). *Kemitraan dan Model-model Pemberdayaan*, Gramedia: Yogyakarta.
- Armada Riyanto, dkk. (2015). *Kearifan Lokal – Pancasila Butir-Butir Filsafat Indonesia*. PT Kanisius: Yogyakarta.
- Davis, Keith. (1972). *Human Behavior at Work*, Fourth Edition. McGraw-Hill Book Company: New York.
- Graafland N. (1991). *Minahasa Negeri Rakyat dan Budayanya*. Yayasan PARAHITA: Jakarta.
- Hikmat Harry R,. (2001). *Strategi Pemberdayaan Masyarakat*. PT Humaniora Utama Press: Bandung.
- Kalangi N.S. (1979). *Kebudayaan Minahasa*. Universitas Indonesia: Jakarta.
- Greene, Charles N., et al.,. (1985). *Management*. Prentice-Hall. Inc. : USA
- Haiman, Theo, et al.,. (1982). *Management*. Fourth Edition. Houghton Mifflin Company: USA.

- Hawking, Del I, Coney, Kenneth A., dan Best, Roger J., (1980). *Consumer Behavior Implications for Marketing Strategy*. Business Publications, Inc.,: Dallas
- Heidjrachman Ranupandojo dan Suad Husnan. (1982). *Manajemen Personalia*. Edisi Revisi. BPFE: Yogyakarta.
- Hersey, Paul dan Blanchard, Ken. (1988). *Management of Organizational Behavior Utilizing Human Resources*. Fifth Edition. Prentice-Hall, Inc.,: New Jersey.
- Hunsaker, Philip L. dan Cook, Curtis W., (1986). *Managing Organizational Behavior*. Addison-Wesley Publishing Company Massachusetts.
- Kelly, Joe, (1980). *Organizational Behavior Its Data. First Principles and Applications*. Third Edition. Richard D. Irwin. Inc. : Illinois.
- Koontz, Harold dan Wehrich Heinz, (1988). *Management*. Ninth Edition. McGraw-Hill Book, Co.: Singapore.
- Kreitner, Robert, (1983). *Management*. Second Edition. Houghton Mifflin Company: USA.
- Luthans, Freed, (1989). *Organizational Behavior*. Fifth Edition. McGraw-Hill Book Company: New York.
- Moleong, Lexy J. (1993). *Metodologi Penelitian Kualitatif*. PT Remaja Rosdakarya: Bandung.
- Robert Chamber. (1995). *Poverty and Livelihoods: Whose Reality Counts*. Uner Kirdar and Leonard Silk (eds.), *People: From Impoverishment to Empowerment*. New York; New York University Press, 1995 *Discussion Paper*.
- Stoner, James A.F. Freeman, R Edward & Gilbert, Jr. Daniel R., (1995). *Management*, edisi keenam, Prentice Hall, Inc.: USA.
- Stoner, James A.F. dan Wankel, Charles, (1986). *Management*. Third Edition. Prentice-Hall International, Inc.: USA
- Sukanto Reksohadiprojo dan T. Hani Handoko, (1983). *Organisasi Perusahaan: Teori dan Perilaku*. BPFE: Yogyakarta.
- Trewatha, Robert L., dan Newport, M Gene, (1982). *Management*. Third Edition. Business Publications, Inc.,: Texas.
- Weber, Ross A., (1979). *Management*. Revised Edition. Richard D. Irwin, Inc.,: USA.
- Rompas, dkk. Drs. A.F. (1987). *Beberapa Ciri Khas dan Bentuk Mapalus di Minahasa*. Fakultas Sastra UNSRAT: Manado.
- Supit. B., (1984). *Minahasa Dari Amanat Watu Pinawetengan Sampai Gelora Wiwanua*. Sinar Harapan: Manado.
- Tumenggung S., dkk. (1980). *Sistem Gotong Royong Dalam Masyarakat Pedesaan Daerah Sulut*. Proyek Kebudayaan Daerah Pusat Penelitian Sejarah Dan Budaya Sulut: Manado.
- Turang J. (1983). *Mapalus di Minahasa*. Posko Operasi Mandiri Tingkat Dua Kabupaten Minahasa : Minahasa.